



Maja Kay Fontichiaro

February 17, 1975 - June 17, 2021

Dr. Maja Kay Fontichiaro (née Holkeboer) was beautiful on the inside and out. Quiet and disarming on the outside, she was also fiercely confident under the surface. Born February 17, 1975, Dr. Fontichiaro grew up in Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor, MI where she attended Pattengill Elementary and Tappan Middle School. She spent one semester of high school in Argentina as an exchange student and graduated from Community High School in 1993. Before graduating Magna Cum Laude from the Journalism Institute at New York University, she interned on NBC's Today Show, and later worked on the editorial staff for Martha Stewart Living and Boston Magazine. After returning to Ann Arbor, she worked at Beyond Interactive, then followed her passion for animal care, working at Washtenaw Veterinary Hospital and attending Eastern Michigan University for her veterinary school prerequisites. Maja received her DVM, and numerous academic achievement awards at Michigan State University in 2006. She practiced at Heritage Animal Hospital in Dundee, MI, and was the Medical Director for Affordable Veterinary Services in Ann Arbor. Throughout her career, Maja found homes for an ever-expanding number of stray pets among her family members, always attending to their medical care afterwards.

She married Rob Fontichiaro in Vermont on December 20, 2004, and shortly thereafter moved to their home in Saline, MI. There they raised their two children, in addition to the many cats, dogs, chickens and goats that brought

her joy. Scientific and curious, she loved word puzzles, reading a good book, and playing Scrabble with her mother, who was her best friend. A lifelong vegetarian who loved nature, she grew her own produce, and enjoyed nothing more than a nature hike with her family in Northern Michigan or near the family cottage on Houghton Lake to look for ducks and to identify trees and wild plants. An early riser all her life, she enjoyed a morning cup of tea alongside the family cat, Mimi, and baked annual holiday fruitcakes for her appreciative family members. Unflappable and independent, she was also kind, supportive and caring, accepting people for who they are. She was unfailingly punctual, always patient, an active volunteer in her children's schools, a wonderful writer, and a reliable and dependable friend. Most of all, she loved being a mother to her two children, Aurora (9) and Lucas (6).

Throughout her 18 month-long, courageous battle with cancer, Maja applied her scientific training to collaborating with her oncologists and doctors, helping her to communicate the potential risks and rewards of various medical treatments to her family. On June 16, 2021, she chose to end life-prolonging treatment, and died peacefully the next day at age 46 with her family at her side. On her last day of life, she spent four hours in her hospital room with her loving husband and children. The family would like to thank the doctors, nurses and staff with University of Michigan Oncology, Critical Care, Hospice, and Patient and Family Services.

Dr. Fontichiaro donated her body to the University of Michigan Anatomical Donations Program for the purpose of ongoing education and research. A private service will be held to celebrate her life, along with her Great-Aunt, Edith Louise Pemberton, and Grandmother, Dorothy Strand, to whom she was especially close. She is survived by her husband, Rob; their children, Aurora and Lucas; father, Robert Holkeboer; mother Katie Strand-Evans and stepfather, Gary Evans; brother, John Holkeboer, and step-brother and step-sister, Gary James Evans and Aimee Behrmann, in addition to many adoring

aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews and in-laws.

Life is a gift that we all give back some day. When someone dies young, we can't help lamenting the life they would have lived and the goals they would have met. Though Maja wanted to do more in her life, she was ready to go with dignity and grace when her time came. May we remember that we still have a chance to live our lives the way she would want us to.

Cemetery Details

Washtenong Memorial Park

3771 Whitmore Lake Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48105
<http://washtenongmemorialpark.com/>

Tribute Wall



“ *Maja Kay Fontichiaro*

October 23, 2023 at 01:07 PM



“ *Rob we are so sorry to hear of the passing of your wife we send our condolences to you and your family Karen and Dennis Morris (your Houghton Lake neighbors)*

Karen Morris - July 15, 2021 at 08:10 PM



“ *Extending our heartfelt condolences and sympathies to Rob,Aurora,Lucas and all the Family . Maja will forever remain in our hearts. May she Rest in Peace and May her memory be a blessing.*

Bernadette and Donald de Klerk - June 26, 2021 at 07:46 PM



“ *To the family of Maja, heartfelt condolences. May the good Lord wrap his loving arms around you all and bring you comfort and peace.*

Karen K Court - June 26, 2021 at 06:22 PM



“ *Garden Bench - "Gone yet not forgotten..." was purchased for the family of Maja Kay Fontichiaro.*



June 26, 2021 at 08:02 AM

JO

“ *A beautiful tribute for an equally beautiful human. My heart aches for all she's been through and all you will miss. Her legacy will endure with the love felt in this post.*

Jane Ollila - June 25, 2021 at 12:10 PM

SB

“ *Maja was unique. The first time I met her...it was at a birthday party for one of Aurora and my daughter, Scarlett's, pre-school buddies. We were drawn to each other immediately. Friends forever since. I told Maja recently, that I instantly knew I wanted her on my team. We had a good laugh over that! In short, I wanted to know her. That I did. And I am forever blessed because of that.*

Sarah Benz - June 25, 2021 at 11:32 AM



“ *Ringed by Love was purchased for the family of Maja Kay Fontichiaro.*



June 24, 2021 at 09:14 PM

JC

“ *Janet Ledford & Patrick Clancy purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Maja Kay Fontichiaro.*



Janet Ledford & Patrick Clancy - June 24, 2021 at 07:48 PM

PC

“ *Dr. Maja was doctor to our pets for many, many years. She so loved her work and the animals in her care. Janet also worked with her often. Kind and funny, she was a pleasure to be around. Our hearts go out to her family and friends, she will be missed so much. Our love to you.*

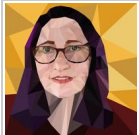
Janet Ledford & Pat Clancy

Patrick J Clancy - June 24, 2021 at 11:00 AM



Dr. Maja was the Best...

Janet Ledford - June 25, 2021 at 06:40 PM



“ *All of my happy childhood memories have Maja in them. I still remember the first day she approached me on the playground in 1st grade. I was lucky to have her as a friend.*

Joelyn Welch - June 23, 2021 at 06:41 PM

SY

“ *Our camping trips with Maja and her family will always be treasured memories. She was a willing camper and fun to be with. Such a beautiful person, inside as well as outside! Our hearts go out to her loved ones.*

Sandy and John Yee

Sandra Yee - June 23, 2021 at 03:59 PM

DM

“ *BEST. VET. EVER.*

Dr Bill MacArthur - June 20, 2021 at 07:59 PM

BW

I worked with Maja at Heritage when she was fresh out of vet school. She was a phenomenal vet. Kind and caring to everyone. We went through some ultrasound training together and she appreciated her vet techs as well as her dvm coworkers.

Bobbie Weaver

Bobbie Weaver - June 22, 2021 at 09:19 PM



I've just noticed about the passing away of my eternal friend Maja. I met her in Ushuaia, Argentina when she was in a student exchange. She used to live at my friend's parents house. We got along each other very well. We used to have a cup of tea somewhere in the downtown very often while snowing by those days.. We kept writing letters back and forth since 1992 until 1997 or so and later on until 2012 (the last e-mail). I keep all those letters and pictures as a friendship treasure deeply in my heart. We used to talk about the life, we used to laugh a lot, we used to walk all along the town while freezing in wintertime, we used to hear a lot of music and exchanges tapes. She taught me some english grammar and I taught her some spanish sentences. We had so many fun exchanging our own languages! I was 20 and she was 17.... Good bye my friend. Always in my heart. Life seems to be so unfair sometimes. Deeply in my soul...for ever.

Marcos Rocca - March 05, 2024 at 06:35 PM

TB

“ *Tizi Canducci and Rick Bailey purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Maja Kay Fontichiaro.*



Tizi Canducci and Rick Bailey - June 20, 2021 at 11:34 AM